

lation in order to better expand our knowledge of ourselves and to improve our perspective about the planet earth and its inhabitants. I have elsewhere (Reference 5) listed ten reasons for visiting earth; some facetious but none totally impossible or implausible.

Let us first examine the question of the planet earth compared to the other planets in this solar system. Earth has a number of unique features. This earth is much denser than all of the other planets (except Pluto) and therefore must have some denser materials on it. It has a magnetic field and must therefore have iron-like elements in profusion, and some other interesting but heavy metals such as uranium, gold, tungsten, platinum, and light metals such as aluminum, titanium, beryllium, magnesium and boron. The earth is covered with liquid water and gaseous oxygen and nitrogen in a way in which no other planet in the solar system is provided. This would certainly be of interest to earthling-like creatures.

The earth-moon system is unique in the solar system in that the moon is larger compared to the size of the earth than is any other planetary satellite and is also further away compared to the size of the mother planet. In effect we have a twin planet situation in which one body has (at least for awhile) all the necessities of life such as light, water, air, relatively even temperatures, as well as protection against meteorites, solar ultraviolet, cosmic rays, and the solar wind. The moon offers working areas having a very high vacuum and a very low magnetic field, very dark regions, regions of no electromagnetic background, regions of very low temperatures, and low gravity for easy launching of interstellar vehicles, and Earth Excursion Modules, and no corrosive atmosphere to resist flight and damage materials. It would make an ideal base from which to receive and transmit signals from other star systems and to provide a convenient way station near a place having all kinds of other items of interest.

I should stress that the earth also has readily available supplies of substances which we weren't aware of or at least didn't care about until recently. Hydrogen isotopes are here in profusion and might be used to fuel fusion propulsion systems. Liquid water is a far more convenient form of hydrogen than is gaseous ammonia or hydrogen itself. Water, incidentally, has more hydrogen per cubic inch than has liquid hydrogen, strange as that may seem.

Many other isotopes are also available along with the previously mentioned metals - and others, many of which were only lab curiosities until this century - such as uranium, rhenium, tantalum, zirconium. The density of the earth and the presence of water vapor, oxygen, nitrogen, and a magnetic field can be determined from off the earth.

The earth also is an attractive site for the growing of a fantastic variety of substances requiring water and sunlight and fertilizer of one sort or another - especially if one has access to all locations with an Earth Excursion Module. Just consider the variety of farming conditions available in terms of type of soil, latitude, growing season, altitude, humidity, etc. The sunlight is free and readily available. The atmosphere, ocean, and surfaces also provide a convenient source of raw materials for chemical processing, either here, on board the mother ship or on the moon.

The above discussion is concerned only with the place - earth-moon. Let us now discuss the inhabitants and other reasons for coming here than using the "place". First let us note that the above discussion assumes that interstellar travel is common throughout a good sized fraction of the universe. This is roughly the equivalent of saying that transoceanic flights are common on earth

or that orbital spaceships are common. Not everybody flies across the ocean and certainly not everyone owns his own Boeing 747 for so doing, but there are a number of very expensive quite large planes making regular trips back and forth. Think of the contrast between the flights of the 70's and the balloons of a century ago (remember Around the World in 80 Days?) and then take the steps from 747s to Apollo manned spaceships which go around the earth in 90 minutes. Yet, it takes a lot of energy and effort to fly an Apollo spaceship (or at least the 60 times heavier Saturn rocket) but consider what we will be capable of doing in 100 or 1000 or 1,000,000 years and what progress others undoubtedly made a billion years ago out there.

If you were from an advanced civilization where sociology had kept pace with technology (or you would have been destroyed), wouldn't you be concerned about the inhabitants of a planet on which technology was well ahead of sociology? Wouldn't you rate as primitive a society for which every new frontier is a place to do battle rather than a stimulus for greater brotherhood and mutual efforts towards a better life for all the inhabitants of the tiny spaceship earth? It may be that the intergalactic council has rules about interference with primitive species so long as they limit their unpleasantness to their own planet but would they be permitted to do damage elsewhere? I seriously doubt it.

Certainly, in view of the events of the past which have included the use of atomic weapons and rockets first separately and then mated together would anyone observing the earth from time-to-time believe that we would refrain from spreading our peculiar brand of friendship to other planetary bodies? One must also note that the rate of technological progress has been steadily increasing so that an observer would be concerned not necessarily about the present but rather about the very near (on a cosmic time scale) future. After all, it took less than three years from the first controlled chain reaction to the first atomic bomb and less than four from the first satellite to the first manned space flight and only another eight for the first lunar landing. In short, earthlings would give any observer concern for where we are going and how we plan to get there. From an entirely different viewpoint one might say that we are almost at the point where we would be worth conquering. You pay your money and takes your choice.

MYTH: "No sightings have occurred in recent years."

I have had many newsmen and other people suggest that the whole problem of UFOs has in essence gone away. After all "I haven't seen anything in the papers". While it is certainly true that many big-city papers have carried next to nothing about sightings in the couple of years since the Condon report was issued, it is clearly not at all true that UFOs are not being observed. One can judge that sightings are still occurring by reading the Flying Saucer Review, the APRO Bulletin, and the more limited distribution but still very useful publications such as SKYLOOK (the publication of the Midwest UFO Network), DATA NET, the Kansas-Oklahoma Newsletter, "Saucers, Space, and Science," etc. - to all of which I personally subscribe. Perhaps a more objective evaluation of at least newspaper UFO publicity is possible by examining the monthly clipping batch issued by Rod Dyke (\$4/month from UFO Research Committee, 3521 S.W. 104th, Seattle, Washington, 98146) which typically includes about 15 tightly packed legal size pages of clippings about UFOs - almost entirely sightings - from all over the world. I do not know how many clippings are not included but it is certainly clear the UFOs haven't stopped being reported at least in local newspapers.